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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

US/PC/35

Approved: S  
9/20/59

DATE: September 4, 1959  
TIME: 5:00 p.m.  
PLACE: American Embassy, Paris

PARTICIPANTS: United States  
The Secretary of State  
Ambassador Houghton  
Mr. Ivan B. White  
Mr. Frederick Nolting  
Mr. Randolph Kidder

France  
Foreign Minister Couve de Murville  
Ambassador Alphand  
Mr. Charles Lucet

SUBJECT: Reported Plan of President Eisenhower to Write General de Gaulle;  
French Mediterranean Fleet; Dollar Restrictions; Germany and Berlin;  
Algeria; Consultation; United Nations; Meeting of Two Presidents

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The following is a memorandum of conversation between the Secretary of State and the Foreign Minister which took place in the Embassy Residence immediately prior to the Secretary's departure from Paris.

Reported Plan of President Eisenhower to Write General de Gaulle. Couve opened the conversation by stating that he had learned from General de Gaulle that President Eisenhower planned to write a letter to de Gaulle covering three subjects. It was apparent that Couve had only fragmentary information regarding this matter as he mentioned only two subjects and in both cases was extremely vague. He first referred to NATO affairs but specified only the problem of the regulation of the status of the French Mediterranean Fleet. The second subject he mentioned was atomic affairs but he added that he assumed this meant something like the stockpile question.

French Mediterranean Fleet. On the problem of the French Mediterranean Fleet, Couve expressed the view that the matter can be resolved without too much difficulty. The Secretary pointed out, however, that the Admiral Navy memorandum does not, he believes, provide a basis on which an agreement can be reached. Mr. Nolting supported that view, saying that, based on memory, he does not think the Navy memorandum would accomplish the purpose of putting the French Mediterranean Fleet on the same basis as the American and UK fleets. He explained that first,

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priority for US and UK fleets in wartime is within the NATO context, whereas first priority for the French fleet, in the Navy Memorandum, is for national use, NATO employment being a secondary consideration.

Dollar Restrictions. The Secretary raised the problem of dollar restrictions in France. Ambassador Houghton remarked that while a large part of the imports from the US are now free, there remain several restrictions. Couve replied that a new series of concessions were expected for October and said that like everyone else the French are moving towards liberty in this field, particularly as regards agricultural products. He expressed the opinion that quotas would probably have disappeared in a year's time. He is, however, aware that there has been discrimination since the war. He himself, however, is all for liberalization.

Germany and Berlin. In reply to the Secretary's query as to other matters to be discussed, Couve mentioned Germany and Berlin and expressed the opinion that it would probably be best to let things remain just as they are. The Secretary expressed agreement. Couve then said that the French are now preparing a reply to the Soviet note of August 16. There will be nothing new.

The Secretary said that he discussed these matters with Foreign Minister von Brentano and told Couve that President Eisenhower had asked Chancellor Adenauer if he was giving consideration to a long-run solution of the Berlin problem. The Secretary pointed out that occupation cannot be a permanent solution and added that Adenauer has been giving this matter thought. Although a moratorium may be satisfactory for the time being, we must be thinking of long-term solutions. In regard to Berlin, he said that it doesn't seem to be indicated that the free zone would become incorporated in the Federal Republic or that a corridor would be established. Couve asked whether there might be some solution between the extremes of incorporation by the Federal Republic and the establishment of a free city. The Secretary replied that some solution might be found involving international guarantees with probably some troops remaining.

Couve said that he sees no evidence of change in the Soviet position. The Secretary expressed agreement and said there had been no suggestion for a reconvening of the Foreign Ministers. However, should Khrushchev come up with new suggestions, this would probably necessitate reconvening. At this point, Ambassador Alphand said we are continuing to meet in Washington on contingency planning and asked if it is really necessary to go on. Couve asked, why not? The Secretary added he did not think it likely any contingencies, such as envisaged in the planning, would arise before the exchange of visits between Washington and Moscow.

With regard to Couve's query if all was settled on disarmament, the Secretary replied in the affirmative.

Algeria. Couve said that as regards Algeria, all we could do at the moment is to wait. The Secretary pointed out that we shall probably wish to

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obtain certain clarifications from the French and would probably wish to discuss tactics with them.

Consultation. Couve referred to the last clause in the joint communique on the talks between the two Presidents and asked if we should not say something to the British about this. The Secretary replied that we should and added that President Eisenhower had talked to Mr. Macmillan about this question and said we would plan to consult as closely with the French as we did with the British.

Couve mentioned that President Eisenhower had told General de Gaulle that for the purpose of tripartite consultation there could be set up a series of ad hoc committees. It was suggested that the details of this might be worked out in Washington. Couve then referred to the specific problem of coordination of views on Morocco and Tunisia and wondered if certain tripartite talks might not take place in Paris. The Secretary commented that as regards Morocco and Tunisia, it would be extremely difficult for us to have the consultation elsewhere than Washington as all our military and financial planning is done there and it would be extremely difficult to provide the necessary experts for consultation in Paris.

United Nations. Couve said that he would be in New York as of the 14th and planned to stay until the end of September. In reply to a question which Couve raised, the Secretary stated that the Greeks do not wish to be candidates for a seat in the Security Council.

Meeting of Two Presidents. During the conversation, Ambassador Houghton expressed the deep appreciation and admiration of all the Americans participating in the Presidential visit for the magnificent effort and job which had been done by the French.

Drafted by:  
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Cleared by: FUP - Mr. White

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